

This trip taught me true the value of what it means to have a supportive, stable family and safe community. I came in wondering how these orphans would be after experiencing levels of trauma - abandonment, abuse, malnutrition, etc. - and [most] living without a full family support system. What I saw was children who called each other brother and sister, who leaned on each other, and who played with each other. They had found that family within this orphanage, and the safe and supportive environment within it's walls gave these children a chance in a world they otherwise might not have had. It made me think of how lucky I was to have an amazing family at home, and how much I take for granted the unconditional love and support they give me in everything I do.



As an aspiring Occupational Therapist, this trip gave me the opportunity to see how essential of a role I can play within the healthcare system. I had the chance one night, after noticing the lack of understanding of basic first aid skills while working within the community of Ghana, to give an impromptu First Aid class to the adults working with the children. Over the course of just a few hours, I demonstrated the proper use and application of materials to help with wound care and management in order to prevent infection and to ensure proper healing of the injured area. After modeling the techniques, the men and women were provided with opportunities for hands on practice to make sure they understood and could perform these skills. This experience highlighted to me how essential an occupational therapist would be working in this region, as empowering people with the tools to manage their own health, thereby increasing their independence, is what I believe to be the very foundation of Occupational therapy.

BuckiServ International Trip

I went on an Ohio State BuckiServ trip this past July-August to Ghana. Our group served the vulnerable youth and women through the Akumanyi Foundation by assisting with water filling and filtration to sanitize for daily use, completing daily house chores, providing daily play and educational experiences with the children, and participating in cultural immersion experiences to better develop an understanding of local Ghanaian traditions, beliefs, and challenges.

Africa is often generalized to the point where everyone seems to hold the same views about the entire continent, when in fact, the many countries - 54, to be exact - are all very different. When I would say I am going to Africa, I often had to stop myself and say Ghana specifically, because every part of Africa is different, and just because I have been to Ghana, doesn't mean I now understand all that Africa encompasses. On the flip side, it is interesting how in saying North America, we just think about the U.S., and we forget countries like Canada and Mexico are also encompassed in this broad terminology. I say this to make the point that I, among many others, came to Africa with very generalized thoughts and impressions of what it would be like. In turn, all of the Ghanaians we met along the way probably had their own set of assumptions regarding the walking attraction our nearly all white service group impressed on them. I found that my views of Africa as a whole were able to be completely transformed because I not only was able to have first-hand experiences in a small portion of the massive continent, but I was also able to recognize how my generalizations had prevented me from being able to truly know and understand the culture and landscape of something so unfamiliar to my life here at home. I think that this level of self-reflection and new understanding is something that has helped me grow in my own life, and I feel like I am able to have a better understanding of parts of the world I had previously been ignorant to know the full depth and beauty of.



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The beautiful girl pictured above and to the left of this paragraph's name is Charity 2. She is a twin, and her sister's name is Charity 1. My most favorite memory from this trip was a reoccurring one, and something I looked forward to every day. Around the same time every afternoon, I had the honor of holding Charity 2 for her nap. She would snuggle up on my shoulder, and rest her head and fall into a deep sleep, and I would feel her full weight fall upon me as I held her. Holding her while she slept, and feeling her chest rise and fall against mine, was one of the most simple, yet beautiful experiences I had during the trip.



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